

# The Burkes Pass Heritage Trust Newsletter

## April 2016



### **Annis Cottage Cobbing**

We will be working on cob repairs on Saturday May 7<sup>th</sup> and anyone who would like to lend a hand or be a 'supervisor' would be very welcome. The words of Alan H, an old friend and skilled craftsman, spring to mind here. He would wander over and say casually, "There are two ways of doing things, the right way and the way you are doing it!"

Contact Jane by email or phone/leave message at 03 685 6271 (Burkes Pass).

### **The Saville Family Return to Highfield Cottage**

A gloriously sunny calm day on March 12<sup>th</sup> welcomed the descendants of Frederick and Elsie Saville for a visit, kindly hosted by Bev Hurst. The Savilles owned Horwell Downs from 1913, when they drew a winning ballot for a section of Ashwick, until 1955. Muzzie and Pops, as they were known to their grandchildren, were a couple with flair and ingenuity, creating a living from a block that was never an easy one. A high point was a world record bid for 3 bales of their scoured wool at auction in London in 1951. Two of their grandchildren, Warner and Claire, remembered living in the cottage with their parents Jim and



Beryl Saville. Other family members had the name Horwell Downs embedded in their memories from early childhood and it was obvious the pleasure they had in seeing it for the first time. While the cottage is slowly being brought back to life, the main house from their grandparent's day has been long gone. However enough remnants of stone pillars and foundations remain to confirm the evidence of photographs showing a stylish residence, remnants of a beautiful garden and driveway. We all felt that in keeping with the tradition of the place, Bev should keep her eye out for that splendid yellow Daimler that the Savilles drove.

### **Oral History Handover to the South Canterbury Museum**

Personal stories of life at Burkes Pass were recorded in recent years by Jacqui Foley of Living Story Productions Ltd as stage 2 of Burkes Pass Heritage Trust archives. The five generous people who participated were Bruce Alexander, Winton Ballantyne, Prue Clark (nee Parker), Ward Clarke and the late Nancy McKinnon. DVD's of their interviews and a transcript of each were created and will be given to the South Canterbury Museum archives to hold and be available to the public and researchers for the benefit of future generations. The date for this handover event will be advertised and take place in the next month or two at the museum in Timaru when we hope to play short clips of these stories and celebrate with some refreshment afterward.

### **St Patrick's Church Weddings**

It has been a busy year so far for weddings at the church and a welcome change from the quiet of last year. The participants who included one with a local connection, a Roman Catholic wedding and a couple from the UK who were celebrating a renewal of vows. All reported having a very happy experience. A big thank you to Julie Greig for providing the wonderful support for these events and making them feel welcome.

## Nancy McKinnon

Sadly, Nancy who was a great supporter of the Burkes Pass Heritage Trust passed away late last year. Her family, the Whytes, moved to Burkes Pass when she was very young, she attended Burkes Pass School and after leaving school worked at the Burkes Pass Hotel, married a local boy, Mac McKinnon and later the couple took over 'Rona' Station from his parents. A photograph taken on the church porch on her wedding day was the catalyst for discovery and eventual installation of the original style St Patrick's church leadlight windows. She has left a wonderful legacy in her oral history of life in the village, growing up in Whytes cob cottage (now Elm Tree Cottage) and the various activities she took part in as a wife and young mother. We will miss her cheerful presence at our gatherings.

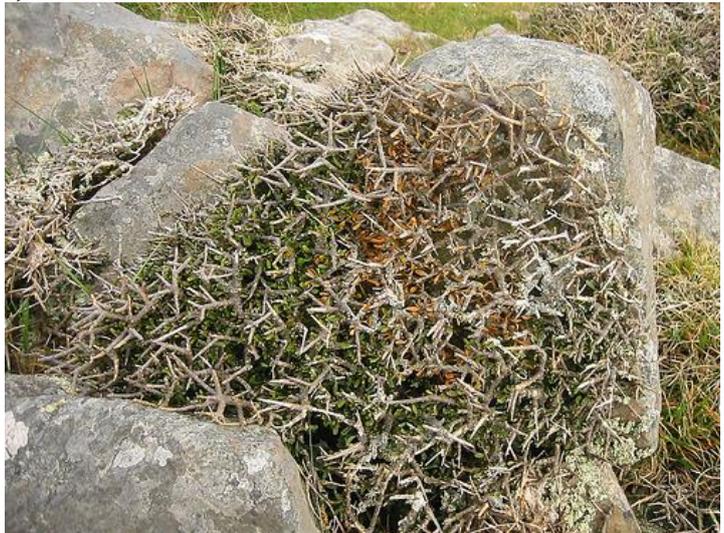


## Kauri Bench Seats

Thank you to Dave Taylor for donating to the Trust several original old bench seats with Mackenzie Community origins. They will be used in the various cottages being restored by the Trust and will be both useful and appropriate for these buildings.

## Melicytus alpinus (Porcupine shrub)

This remarkable plant that is a member of the violet family is a low growing rugged little shrub also known as Mahoe. It grows on dry exposed Burkes Pass hillsides blending into rocky outcrops or crouching on the most inhospitable sunny faces where even short tussocks would struggle. The stiff interlacing branches on the exterior look much like the spines of a porcupine with most of the small leaves held protected on the interior, an arrangement that helps reduce heat and drought stress.



Important plants for covering otherwise bare soils and reducing erosion, they provide a wonderful habitat for native geckos and skinks to hide in. At this time of year their white berries, found also mostly on the interior surfaces, provide food for these small reptiles who repay the favour by distributing the seeds to new ground. You have to admire the resilience of this species; they look a bit like cushions on a hard surface but just don't try to sit on one.

Regards,  
Jane

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